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C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000960

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF AND AF/E

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SUBJECT: CABINET DIRECTOR TANI SAYS DORALEH IS A DJIBOUTI
-- NOT DUBAI -- PROJECT

REF: DJIBOUTI 846 (NOTAL)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA D. RAGSDALE.
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) During Ambassador's call on Ismail Hussein Tani, President Guelleh's Cabinet Director, to discuss the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (see septel), Tani -- who describes his job as "translating and explaining the agenda and vision of President Guelleh to Djiboutians" -- commented on the huge Doraleh port project that is generating much debate in Djibouti. The Government's critics call the project an example of Djibouti's subjugation to "Dubai, Incorporated."

12. (C) Tani preferred to describe Djibouti's Doraleh port project as a "partnership" between Dubai and Djibouti. "It is a win-win situation which we welcome because the relationship will boost Djibouti's economy," he told Ambassador. It should be clear, though, he added, that the Doraleh port project belongs to Djibouti. Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) simply "owns" (his term) the oil terminal. Dubai Ports International (DPI), (an ENOC affiliate) which manages the airport and existing seaport in Djibouti, has been authorized to manage Doraleh's construction and to search for sources of financing, Tani continued. The authority of the Government of Djibouti, he remarked, is represented by Abdurahman Boreh (a prominent Djiboutian businessman and Doraleh port investor), and is very trusted by the Government. Asked about Boreh's share in the project, Tani responded "of course, Boreh has his personal interest in the port and owns some shares." Yet our biggest partner for use of Doraleh, he told Ambassador, will be Ethiopia. He clarified that Ethiopia will not be given any decision-making authority over the port because the port is intended to benefit "all interested parties" and not solely Ethiopia.

13. (C) Tani stated that the Government of Djibouti is grateful for the U.S. Navy's (NAVCENT's) contract (via DESC) for four fuel storage tanks at Doraleh "because the contract promotes the good reputation and viability of Doraleh port." RAGSDALE